

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) The Ministry of Welfare has no information from any State Government regarding death of Scheduled Tribe persons due to poverty during the last two years.

(b) and (c) In view of the reply to (a) above, the question does not arise. However, in respect of steps being taken by the Government of India for alleviating poverty amongst Scheduled Tribes and monitoring of preventive measures against deaths of children in remote and backward tribal areas, a Statement is attached.

Statement

All the programmes of the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment meant for poverty alleviation, such as Integrated Rural Development Programme, as well as Rural Employment Programmes such as Jawahar Rojgar Yojana, Employment Assurance Scheme etc. provide for specific financial and physical targets for STs. Besides Ministry of Welfare also provides Special Central Assistance to the Tribal Sub-Plan of the States for supplementing the State efforts for providing assistance to ST families for Family-Oriented Income-Generating Schemes meant to raise Scheduled Tribes above the poverty line. Loans are also provided by the National Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes Finance Development Corporation through its State channelising agencies for providing employment/income-generating assets on subsidised loan to members of the STs. Reservations in employment are also provided to the STs under the Constitution. It is further intended that different programmes for improving literacy amongst the STs and providing them with opportunities for vocational education and training will help them to cross the poverty line in coming years.

A Central Planning Committee under the chairmanship of the Secretary, Ministry of Welfare has been in existence since 1993 to monitor preventive measures against deaths of children in remote and backward tribal areas. This committee, in consultation with the State Governments, has identified 369 Blocks in 52 districts and 13 States which are vulnerable in this respect and where measures are required to prevent such occurrence. The concerned State Governments are required to prepare specific action plans for this purpose and to operationalise and implement these plans in identified areas, rigorously, particularly during the hardship season from May to September, every year. The measures to be taken under the action plans include setting up of early warning systems, and intensification of programmes in basic areas such as drinking water, health services, nutrition, public distribution system and employment generation. The concerned Central Ministries/Departments such as Ministry on Rural Areas and Employment, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Food Procurement and Distribution, Ministry of Civil

Supplies, Consumers Affairs and Public Distribution are expected to monitor the action taken in this regard by the concerned Department in the respective State Governments.

Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act, 1991

*530. SHRI ISWAR PRASANNA HAZARIKA :
SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA :

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are representations from the Traders Associations and different Chambers of Commerce for not extending the Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 after the same expires in August this year;

(b) if so, the action taken by the Government thereon;

(c) whether the Government are reviewing the provisions of the Act, inconsistent with the ethos of liberalisation;

(d) whether as a part of the review the Government are considering pruning of the list of commodities; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) to (c) The Government have received representations from a few trade organisations against extending the validity of the Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act, 1981 beyond 31st August, 1997. Hoarding and blackmarketing of essential commodities are still prevalent and the situation may not warrant withdrawal of existing powers. However, the matter is under consideration of the Central Government in consultation with the State Government/UT administrations.

(d) and (e) Review of the list of essential commodities under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 is an on-going process. As part of this exercise, Government are considering deletion of some items from the list of essential commodities.

Police Encounter in Connaught Place

*531. SHRI LALIT ORAON :
SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Delhi Police recently killed two

innocent persons by firing in the crowded area of Connaught Place in Delhi;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether an inquiry has been conducted into the said incident;

(d) if so, the outcome of the inquiry;

(e) the action taken against the persons found guilty;

(f) whether the National Human Rights Commission has expressed concern over the increasing incidents of fake encounters in the country; and

(g) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA) : (a) and (b) Two persons were killed in a shoot out incident at Connaught Place, New Delhi on the 31st March, 1997 allegedly under mistaken identity.

(c) to (e) The investigation of the case has been handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). 15 Police Officials directly involved in the shoot out incident have in the meantime been placed under suspension.

(f) and (g) The Chairman, National Human Rights Commission in his letter dated the 29th March, 1997 addressed to all the Chief Ministers of the State Governments brought to their notice that the Commission had been receiving complaints that instance of fake encounters by the police were on the increase, and recommended certain guidelines to be followed by all the States in connection with handling of cases relating to encounters. The Commission have informed that some of the State Governments which responded in the matter had indicated that the authorities concerned had been directed to follow the guidelines laid down by the Commission in letter and spirit.

Import of Hazardous Waste

* 532. **SHRI S.D.N.R. WADIYAR :**
SHRI RAM BAHADUR SINGH :

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is reported at various quarters that inspite of Delhi High Court's ban on waste import, the quantity of toxic lead waste brought into India from the industrialised nations like Australia and USA has doubled in the past year;

(b) if so, whether the Government have assessed the authenticity of such reports;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Central Pollution Control Board has recently issued directives under the Basel convention to its State units to monitor industries importing waste;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the steps taken in this regard and to fulfil the Basel agreement calling for a ban on trading in toxic wastes?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) to (c) A news item on import of toxic wastes appeared in the *Times of India*, New Delhi on 7th April, 1997 and an additional affidavit was also filed in Writ Petition No. 657/95 in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India by the Petitioner, Director, Research Foundation for Science, Technology & Ecology, New Delhi on the subject.

As per information made available by the Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), Ministry of Commerce, lead scraps identified by their, Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries Inc., Washington (ISRI), codes Racks, Radio, Relays, Ropes and Roses under the Export & Import (EXIM) code No. 780200 00.10 and battery Scrap identified by their ISRI codes Rails and Rakes under EXIM code No. 8548 1000.10 were made freely importable vide notification No. 4/92-97 dated 11.07.96. The DGFT has also not issued any import licence for lead wastes/battery scrap during the period from 1.4.96 to 31.3.97. From 1.4.97 lead wastes/battery scrap have again been restricted for imports.

The import of hazardous wastes is regulated under Rule 11 of the Hazardous Wastes (Management & Handling) Rules, 1989 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. According to these rules exporters are to seek permission from the Ministry of Environment & Forests and the importer has to apply to the State Pollution Control Board of import permission. The licence for imports is granted by the DGFT.

The Hon'ble High Court of Delhi on 10.4.1996 in Writ Petition No. 67/96-M/s. Harshwardhan Steel Vs. Union of India and Others ordered that the Government of India should ensure that no toxic waste is imported into the country. The High Court also stayed all imports of zinc and lead skimmings/ash on 2.4.1997 in a Public Interest Litigation Writ Petition No. 1331/97. The Ministry of Environment & Forests has not granted any permission after the Delhi High Court order of 10.4.1996 and has also written to all the State Pollution Control Board to comply with the High Court's order.

(d) to (f) The Central Pollution Control Board have not issued any specific direction to the State units to monitor industries importing wastes. The Ministry of Environment & Forests have directed the State Governments and State Pollution Control Boards to take necessary action under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for taking expeditious action to implement Hazardous Wastes